



# Enforcement News

## Central Valley Agricultural Water Coalitions Agree To Provide Safe Drinking Water To Those Dependent on Contaminated Wells

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**Sacramento** – Three Central Valley agricultural water coalitions have signed a [settlement agreement](#) with the State Water Resources Control Board to install drinking water kiosks to ensure safe drinking water for individuals who may be impacted by nitrate contamination from nearby drinking water wells.

The settlement with Kaweah Basin Water Quality Coalition, Tule Basin Water Quality Coalition, and Kings River Watershed Coalition Authority – coalitions of San Joaquin Valley growers created to help comply with water quality regulations – was announced today by the State Water Board’s Office of Enforcement.

“Ensuring that communities have safe, affordable drinking water is a high priority of the State Water Board. This settlement and other similar enforcement actions are critical components of the State Board’s strategy to ensure those in need are provided interim sources of safe drinking water until a permanent solution is found,” said Jonathan Bishop, the board’s Chief Deputy Director.

The settlement requires installation of eight water supply stations at areas located near the impacted wells in parts of Tulare and King counties and southern Fresno County. The stations are expected to provide drinking water to between 12,000 and 24,000 people, with each kiosk serving up to 3,000 impacted residents.

The first three water supply stations are required to be operational by April 30, 2019, with the remaining stations being phased in by January 31, 2020. Under the agreement, the coalitions will provide water for at least four years, with an option of extending the requirement until 2028. Bottled water may be provided by the coalitions in situations where individuals are unable to utilize a kiosk.

The settlement is part of a wider effort by the board’s Office of Enforcement to ensure that residents dependent on private wells contaminated with nitrates have access to safe drinking water in the near term while the State Water Board continues to work on long-term solutions to address groundwater issues caused by nitrate.

“The kiosks will provide an expedient resolution to make replacement water available as soon as possible,” said Yvonne West, director of the board’s Office of Enforcement, which has worked closely with landowners, local communities and rural community advocates in recent years to reach agreements on providing interim drinking water.



In 2017, the State reached [agreement](#) with the Salinas Basin Agricultural Stewardship Group, a coalition of farmers and landowners in the Salinas Valley, to provide bottled water to residents whose water is contaminated by nitrate. That agreement, the first large-scale water replacement effort, has served as a model for other parts of the state affected by nitrate contamination.

Contamination of drinking water supplies from use of nitrogen-based fertilizers in irrigated agriculture, waste from dairies, and other sources of nitrate is a serious problem in many areas of the state, particularly in the Tulare Lake Basin and Salinas Valley, where an estimated 250,000 people, including many of the poorest communities in California, are at risk for nitrate contamination.

The State and Regional Water Boards will continue working to develop long-term solutions to address groundwater contamination caused by nitrate. The Boards are committed to ensuring all residents have reliable access to safe and affordable drinking water, a goal the state is pursuing through funding and assistance programs, policy changes to reshape the state's management of water, and enforcement actions to address contamination.

The [settlement agreement](#) can be viewed at the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement [webpage](#).

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